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## **MEDIA RELEASE: Fort Benning to observe German and Italian Memorial Day**

**DATE:** Nov. 12, 2015

**FORT BENNING, Ga. –** Fort Benning will observe German and Italian Memorial Day at the Main Post Cemetery during a ceremony at 2 p.m. Nov. 16.

Thomas Wüfing, the deputy consul general of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Southeastern United States, will speak.

The second Sunday before Advent marks the German memorial holiday, Volkstrauertag, the Day of National Mourning, which was established in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1952.

The annual ceremony at Fort Benning is an established tradition, carried out every year with full military honors.

German and Italian veterans of World War II lay in rest in Fort Benning's Cemetery; a testimony to our Nation's history. Each year, Fort Benning takes the time to reach out to the local German and Italian communities in somber recognition of that history. The 44 German and seven Italian soldiers buried at Fort Benning became prisoners of war after they were captured by the Allies between 1943 and 1945. Most of them died of accidental or natural causes while prisoners either in Missouri, South Carolina or Georgia POW camps.

On Volkstrauertag, the German people pause to remember and commemorate those in arms who died in World Wars I and II, those who lost their lives because of their race, religion, ideology or political convictions, and those who died while fleeing their homeland.

Each year on Nov. 4, Italians come together to celebrate "*Giorno delle Forze Armate*," Italian Armed Forces Day. This day is a national day of unity, commemorating the Allied victory in World War I and honoring members of the Italian Armed Forces, past and present.

There will be a brief reception in The Infantry Chapel's annex after the ceremony. The public is invited to attend the ceremony, the reception is by invitation only.

Media who wish to attend this event should call the Public Affairs Office during duty hours to coordinate a media escort.

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